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Top Secret

219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 1 May 1978

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 1 May 1978

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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Israel-Lebanon

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AFGHANISTAN: New Government

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[] //Pro-Soviet Communists control the new government of Afghanistan. Although information on the situation outside Kabul is fragmentary, there are no indications at present of any serious opposition.//

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[] //With the exception of Revolutionary Council President and Prime Minister Nur Mohammed Taraki, who is the head of the country's Communist Party, none of the members of the cabinet or the Revolutionary Council have been announced. The new regime has renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.//

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[] //The US Embassy in Kabul believes that, in revealing themselves as Communists and in discarding their Islamic nationalist cover, the coup leaders may have made a serious miscalculation in a deeply religious and traditionalist country.//

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[] //The government claims to have complete control of the country. Garrisons in several important cities, including Kandahar where former President Daoud's nephew was in command, are now apparently supporting the new regime. The border, closed during the coup, is again open, and travelers report no signs of resistance to the government.//

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[] //The new rulers are dealing brutally with possible opposition. There is little doubt that most of the leading figures in the old government, including Daoud and his brother Naim,

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have been killed. There have been mass executions in Kabul of lower ranking supporters of Daoud, including soldiers who surrendered after the coup.//

25X1 [] //Prime Minister Taraki, 60, has been a prominent Communist leader since 1965, when he became secretary general of the newly established Communist Party of Afghanistan. The party split in the late 1960s; when the two factions merged again last June, Taraki became chairman of the party's central committee.//

25X1 [] //Prior to his known Communist affiliation, Taraki served in the Afghan Government beginning in 1940. In 1952, he served as press attache at the Afghan Embassy in Washington, resigning from that post when Daoud began his first stint as Prime Minister in 1953. [] 25X1

25X1 [] //Even before the announcement that Taraki had become Prime Minister, the governments of neighboring Iran and Pakistan had believed that the coup was ordered by Moscow as part of a plan to break up Pakistan and encircle Iran. Neither government, however, seems inclined to intervene.//

25X1 [] //The USSR probably continues to view the events in Kabul as a mixed blessing. Although presumably glad to see a pro-Soviet government in Kabul, the Soviets are no doubt aware that the coup will raise suspicions and complicate their dealings with Iran and Pakistan, and perhaps with India. As one Soviet diplomat in Washington observed privately late last week, "the less turbulence in that part of the world, the better it is for us." He doubted that it would be in the USSR's interest to have anything other than a "calm, stable situation" in Afghanistan.//

25X1 [] //In any case, the USSR quickly recognized the new regime in Kabul and will probably continue to underwrite the Afghan armed forces and economy. The Soviets will try to head off any suggestions that they had prior knowledge or were involved in any way in the coup. Early Soviet press reporting on the coup has replayed Western coverage and avoided any direct comment, a clear indication that Moscow wants to appear neutral. 25X1 []

ISRAEL: Begin Visit

25X1 [] Prime Minister Begin, who is visiting the US this week to mark Israel's 30th anniversary, will probably use the occasion to try to rally support for his peace strategy from Jewish-American and other influential groups. Begin is unlikely to offer more than minor adjustments in his earlier proposals. He may point to his government's continuing moratorium on new settlement activity in the occupied territories and its recent reinterpretation of UN Resolution 242--making it applicable to "negotiations" with Jordan--as evidence of Israel's good faith.

25X1 [] Under the impetus of the "Peace Now" Movement, debate over the government's peace proposals has taken on new momentum in Israel since Begin last visited the US in March. Thus far, however, the debate does not seem to have generated the mass support or political leverage necessary to move Begin in the direction of greater flexibility.

25X1 [] After a brief lull in activity, the Peace Now campaign has again shifted into high gear. Recent meetings by Begin and Deputy Prime Minister Yadin with Peace Now leaders have given it added visibility. During the past few days, the movement has won the public support of:

- A large number of Israeli intellectuals including hard-liner Yehoshefat Harkabi, a former government intelligence adviser and leading expert on Arab affairs.
- Some orthodox Israeli religious leaders.
- Ten members of the Knesset, including two moderates from Yadin's Democratic Movement for Change--the largest party in the governing coalition after Begin's Likud--and several opposition Labor deputies.
- A group of prominent American Jews, including two Nobel Prize winners.

25X1 [] Despite its spurt of activity, however, the movement has not yet broadened its support much beyond the relatively affluent, well-educated middle and upper middle classes. Its

conservative pro-government rival, the "Movement for a Secure Peace," has staged impressive efforts of its own, indicating that the Israeli public remains ambivalent toward Begin's negotiating stance.

25X1 [] Recent developments such as the March attack in Israel by Palestinian terrorists belonging to Fatah, near-unanimous public support for the subsequent invasion of south Lebanon, and the widespread Israeli perception that Begin was subjected to unwarranted US pressure during his last visit, have blurred differences over peace issues and discouraged the growth of a more serious national debate. The freeze on new settlement activity and the reinterpretation of Resolution 242 may also have reassured some of Begin's supporters who may have become concerned that he had adopted too intransigent a position.

25X1 [] The opposition Labor Alignment has been attacking the government on negotiation issues, particularly on the question of withdrawal from the West Bank. But Labor continues to suffer from a lack of strong leadership and from factional wrangling over political strategy and is not now seen by most Israelis as a credible challenger.

25X1 [] Within the Begin coalition, a number of moderates in the Democratic Movement For Change continue to criticize Begin's hard line, and a few National Religious Party leaders apparently sympathize with their complaints. Leaders of the Liberal faction in Begin's Likud Party continue to disagree with the economic and labor policies of the Prime Minister's Herut Faction. These rumblings of discontent, however, do not appear to pose serious problems for Begin.

25X1 [] The cabinet ministers with the greatest influence on foreign policy, Defense Minister Weizman and Foreign Minister Dayan, have little ability to push for greater moderation. Weizman has assumed more of a low-key position on Arab-Israeli issues since his ill-timed and unsuccessful challenge to Begin several weeks ago; also, he is now preoccupied with the Lebanon imbroglio. Consequently, other cabinet moderates, who depend on Weizman's lead, have probably grown less inclined to voice strong opposition to Begin's peace plan.

25X1 [] Dayan, however, appears to be encouraging Begin to show greater tactical flexibility. His greatest success so far has been in securing Begin's endorsement for reinterpreting Resolution 242. Because Dayan remains largely isolated within the cabinet and dependent on Begin for his political survival, he must work slowly and cautiously and cannot afford to get very far out in front of Begin on major issues.

25X1 [] Begin himself is reported by some to be increasingly pessimistic and disillusioned over peace prospects and possibly wrestling with the idea of some moderation of his position on the West Bank. Thus far, however, he gives no indication of being willing to divorce himself from his deeply held conservative ideological approach to the negotiations. He seems equally averse to breaking with his powerful supporters in the hard-line Herut and Laam factions of Likud and the hawkish youth wing of the National Religious Party, all of which oppose further moderation in the government's peace plan. [] 25X1

RHODESIA: Muzorewa Under Pressure

25X1 [] *Bishop Muzorewa is under pressure from hard-liners in his United African National Council to repudiate the dismissal of Byron Hove, the black co-minister for justice in Rhodesia's biracial ministerial council.*

25X1 [] Hove was dismissed on Friday--an action that required Muzorewa's concurrence--following a dispute with his white counterpart over the predominant role whites play in the Rhodesian police force. The Bishop is under party pressure to withdraw from the internal settlement if Hove is not reinstated.

25X1 [] This is not the first time since he entered the negotiations with Prime Minister Smith that Muzorewa has been under pressure from his party. The Bishop and even the party's hard-liners, however, have no alternative at the present time to the "internal settlement" reached with Smith, and Muzorewa will probably be able to smooth over the current crisis. [] 25X1

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ITALY: Moro Situation Report

25X1 [] Differences appeared to deepen among Italian political leaders this weekend over how to deal with the Moro kidnapping, as the Red Brigades released several new letters from the Christian Democratic Party president.

25X1 [] The only letters made public thus far are one written to the Christian Democratic Party and another to Socialist Party chief Craxi. Separate letters also were reportedly sent to several prominent Christian Democrats--including President Leone, Prime Minister Andreotti, Senate President Fanfani--and to one Communist leader, Chamber of Deputies President Ingrao.

25X1 [] In the two letters made public, Moro approvingly cites Craxi's recent initiative aimed at securing Moro's release. The Socialist leader has been critical of the government's "no-negotiations" stand and has suggested that some gesture--improved living conditions for imprisoned terrorists, or the release of several jailed left-wing prisoners whose freedom the Red Brigades have not demanded--might induce the terrorists to free Moro.

25X1 [] The government has flatly rejected Craxi's ideas and, until now, has been supported by the other three parties backing Andreotti in parliament. Following the latest letters, however, Social Democratic leader Saragat associated his party with Craxi's initiative. In addition, organized labor's unity on the issue was apparently breached over the weekend when the leader of the Christian Democratic-dominated union confederation endorsed the "spirit" of Craxi's proposal.

25X1 [] So far, the other unions and the other parties supporting the government--the Communists and the Republicans--have given no hint of altering their opposition to the Socialist leader's plan.

25X1 [] Meanwhile, the gulf appears to have widened between the government and the Moro family. In a statement yesterday, the family issued its sharpest and most direct criticism of the government to date and echoed a demand in one of the new

letters from Moro--that the Christian Democratic Party convene its chief deliberative body, the national council, to reconsider the party's position. [REDACTED]

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UN: Economic Commission Meeting

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[REDACTED] //The "Brezhnev proposals" for European conferences on environmental, energy, and transportation issues--made in 1975 to promote East-West contacts following the signing of the Helsinki agreement--were taken up at the recent annual meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in Geneva. The Soviet media have expressed unhappiness over developments at the meeting, but government officials probably are satisfied that at least modest progress was made on proposals that carry President Brezhnev's imprimatur and that tend to deflect some attention from the human rights provisions of the Helsinki agreement.//

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[REDACTED] //Last year the ECE established a group of senior advisers on environmental matters and agreed to hold a high-level conference on the subject as soon as practical. At Soviet urging, the participants in last week's meeting agreed to make every effort to hold such a conference next year. The EC Nine successfully opposed a flat commitment to convene the conference.//

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[REDACTED] //On energy, Soviet refusal to accept creation of a group of senior advisers unless it was explicitly tasked to prepare for a high-level conference kept the proposal for an energy conference from advancing beyond the talking stage. The UK and West Germany would have preferred a positive step toward such a conference, but others in the EC Nine opposed anything beyond creating an advisory group.//

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[REDACTED] //During Czechoslovak President Husak's recent visit to West Germany, Chancellor Schmidt supported the concept of a high-level conference on energy issues, enhancing the climate for Brezhnev's visit to West Germany that is to begin on Thursday. The possibility of a transportation conference--deemed the least promising of the proposals--was not raised at the ECE meeting. [REDACTED]

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Israel-Lebanon

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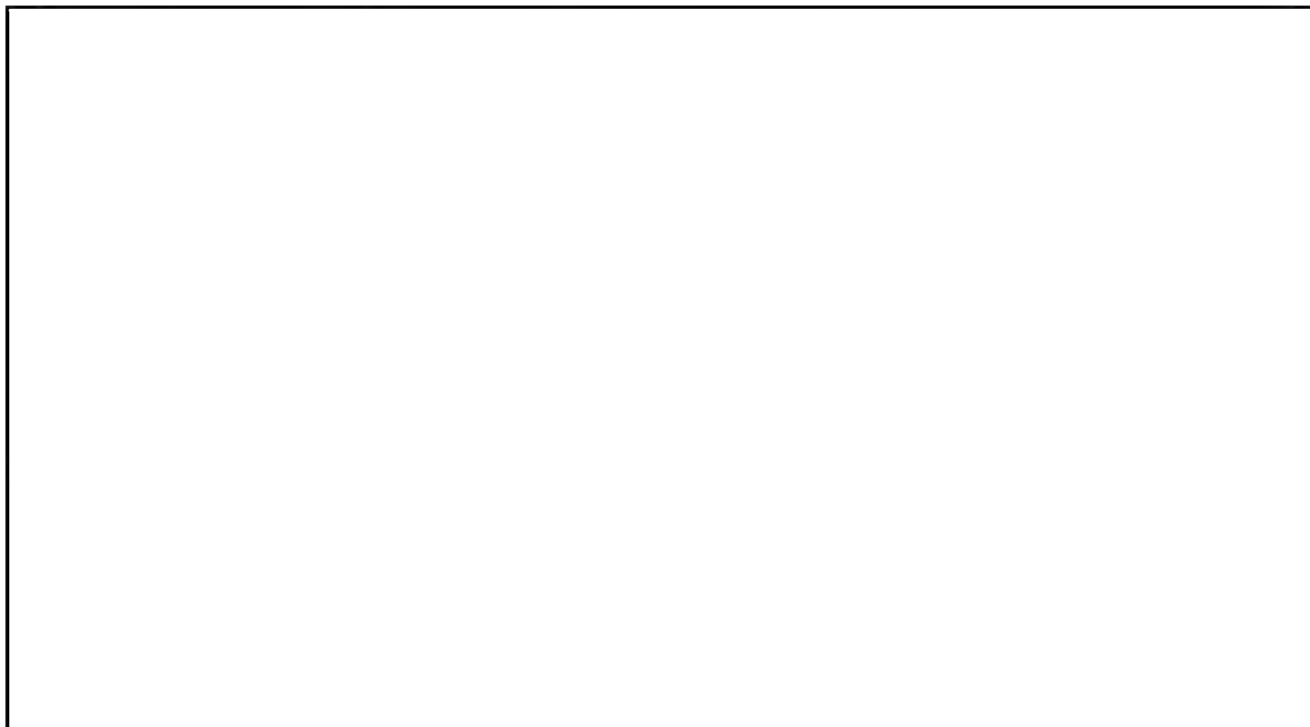
[] Israeli forces yesterday completed the third stage of their withdrawal from southern Lebanon. UN forces have taken up positions in the territory vacated by the Israelis, who now retain a 10-kilometer-wide strip of Lebanese soil.

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[] Israel still maintains that it does not intend to remain in Lebanon, but it insists that proper arrangements--which will take time--are necessary to prevent the return of Palestinian guerrillas to the area. []

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